

Vitamin D

All You Need To Know

July 2015



all of that information is overwhelming, this article provides the basics of what you should know about Vitamin D.

What is it? Vitamin D, or the “sunshine vitamin,” is a hormone your body produces when your skin is directly exposed to the sun. It is important for the absorption of calcium and phosphorous (think ‘strong bones’), and boosting your immune system and energy level. Vitamin D deficiency can lead to osteoporosis, rickets (in children), depression, muscle aches and pains, and fatigue. Studies have also linked low vitamin D levels with increased risks of heart disease, diabetes, cancer, dementia, and autoimmune diseases.

In recent years, Vitamin D has been the subject of more research, increased testing, and more than a few organizations devoted to extolling its virtues. In case

Where is it found? In addition to sunshine, you can also get your daily ‘dose’ of Vitamin D from your diet. Foods like mushrooms, fatty fish, and egg yolks contain Vitamin D. You can also look for foods fortified with Vitamin D, or supplements.

Getting Enough Vitamin D

- Have fun in the sun, safely. Getting 10 to 15 minutes of sunlight on your skin without sunscreen a few times a week provides the average person’s vitamin D needs. After that, sunscreen, shade, or protective clothing will help to reduce the risk of sunburns or skin cancer.
- Eat foods with Vitamin D. 4-ounce portions of salmon, herring or mackerel twice a week can provide significant amounts of Vitamin D. Eggs, yogurt and fortified cereals are also great sources.
- Check on at-risk loved ones. The elderly, obese individuals, babies exclusively breast fed, and those with limited sun exposure are at risk for vitamin D deficiencies. If you are concerned that you or a loved one may not be getting enough Vitamin D, a doctor can help by offering alternatives.

References: Mayo Clinic, WebMD, and CDC.gov

Bring on the Heat! Tips for Healthy Cookouts

Summertime and grilling go hand-in-hand. Barbecues are a great way to enjoy time with your family in the backyard or at a local park. When you grill, you should not throw caution to the wind where your health is concerned. Here are some tips to have the healthiest cookouts.

- Before you set flame to the grill, make sure it’s clean. If it is still dirty from your last cookout, scrub the grates with hot soapy water. After it is clean, heat up the grates before cooking your food.
- Choose lean meats, poultry and seafood. Trim the fat before you place items on the grill. Removing the fat will help avoid flare-ups while cooking.
- Get creative! The grill isn’t just used for meat; add your favorite vegetables, such as zucchini, squash, Portobello mushrooms, onions, bell peppers, eggplant and cabbage as a side dish. Fruit can go on the grill too.

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Try pineapple, peaches and watermelon. The fruit can be a tasty addition to your meal or as a dessert. Cook the fruit on low heat for best results.

- Marinades add a boost of flavor, and can also prevent charring. Charring is when the temperature gets too high causing the meat to blacken and burn, forming carcinogens (cancer-causing substances). Studies by the USDA show a link between charring and cancer. Choose a marinade with canola oil and citrus juice to tenderize the meat. Marinades with garlic and onion also help to reduce carcinogens.
- Use a meat thermometer to make sure the meat is cooked to proper temperature and safe to eat.

Get outside and light up that barbecue! Ready, set...grill!!

Resources: WebMD.com, EatRight.org



Ask the Dietitian Nutrition for Eye Health

Q: My mom just lost her vision due to an eye disease. I know carrots are important for my eyesight but I think they taste awful. Is there anything else I can eat to prevent this from happening to me?

A: No worries! While carrots are the most well-known food to support vision, there are many. The main nutrients that play a role in eye function are vitamin A, vitamin C, vitamin E, omega 3 fats, lutein and zeaxanthin. Vitamin A helps our eyes in two ways. First, it works as an antioxidant to help protect our eyes from damage. Second, it helps form the part of the eye that allows us to see light. Vitamin C, vitamin E, lutein and zeaxanthin are also antioxidants so they offer even more protection from things like smoke or sunlight, (especially important for Floridians). Omega 3 fats are found in our retina, making them vital to eye health. The best way to prevent any disease through food choices, including eye disease, is to eat a variety of fruits, vegetables, nuts, seeds, fatty fish, lean proteins and whole grains. Looking for inspiration? Try to include foods listed at the right in your meals.



- Vitamin A sources: Carrots, sweet potatoes, pumpkin, red peppers, mangos, spinach, cantaloupe, apricots, black-eyed peas
- Vitamin C sources: oranges, tangerines, grapefruit, strawberries, kiwi, peppers, broccoli, baked potatoes, tomatoes
- Vitamin E sources: sunflower seeds, peanuts, almonds, hazelnuts, vegetable oils
- Omega 3 sources: walnuts, salmon, tuna, mackerel
- Lutein and zeaxanthin sources: kale, spinach, collards, turnip greens, broccoli, corn

References: WebMD.com, American Optometric Association, National Institutes of Health

Color Me Fit Your 'fitness personality' is key to an exercise plan you'll love

Have you had trouble sticking to an exercise routine because it just didn't 'fit' your lifestyle? If so, join us for a physical activity program titled, Color Me Fit. This program will share a new and inspiring way to think about physical activity and create an exercise plan that you'll never quit.

The goal of this groundbreaking 5-week program is to help you understand your fitness personality so you can create an exercise program that feels natural, fits into your lifestyle and that you will stick with.



During the program, you will:

- Discover your unique color-coded fitness personality;
- Learn how to take activity from boredom to enjoyment by embracing your natural personality preferences;
- Incorporate physical activity basics in a personalized way, including aerobic activity, strength training and more.
- Understand how change happens and take steps to support the change process.

Receive a free gift if you attend 4 out of 5 Color Me Fit 60-minute sessions. The session will be held Thursdays at 10 a.m. beginning on July 16th in the following Retail Center locations throughout Florida: Pensacola, Winter Haven, Winter Park, Tampa, and Sarasota.

Join Us, it's Free! Seating is limited to the first 25 registered participants. You must be at least 18 years old to participate.

Register online at floridabluecenters.com or call 1-877-FL-BLUE-0

- Session 1: July 16
- Session 2: July 23
- Session 3: July 30
- Session 4: August 6
- Session 5: August 13

***Please note:** This program does not include physical activity as part of the sessions. No special clothing or shoes are required.

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Honey Mustard Turkey Burgers

Burgers made with ground turkey are a lean alternative to beef burgers, providing you choose turkey ground from the breast. Regular ground turkey, which is a mixture of light and dark meat and some skin, contains almost as much fat as regular ground beef. A honey-mustard mixture keeps these low-fat patties moist and succulent.

Makes: 4 servings

Active total time: 25 minutes

Ingredients:

- 1/4 cup coarse-grained mustard
- 2 tablespoons honey
- 1 pound ground turkey breast
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 1/4 teaspoon freshly ground pepper
- 2 teaspoons canola oil
- 4 whole-wheat hamburger rolls, split and toasted
- Lettuce, tomato slices and red onion slices, for garnish

Preparation:

1. Prepare a grill.
2. Whisk mustard and honey in a small bowl until smooth.
3. Combine turkey, 3 tablespoons of the mustard mixture, salt and pepper in a bowl; mix well. Form into four 1-inch-thick burgers.
4. Lightly brush the burgers on both sides with oil. Grill until no pink remains in center, 5 to 7 minutes per side. Brush the burgers with the remaining mustard mixture. Serve on rolls with lettuce, tomato and onion slices

Nutrition: Per serving: 317 calories; 11 g fat (3 g sat, 2 g mono); 65 mg cholesterol; 31 g carbohydrates; 26 g protein; 3 g fiber; 593 mg sodium; 387 mg potassium.

Recipe courtesy of Eatingwell.com



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